

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service
Eastern Region



2012 STAKEHOLDER REPORT



URBAN CONNECTIONS 2012



2012 Urban Connections Stakeholder Report



Forest Service Conservation education intern Jessica escorts Smokey Bear as he welcomes Milwaukee youth to the "Urban Overnight" event

The vision of the Eastern Region's Urban Connections program is to build and foster relationships with urban residents. This involves sharing information and encouraging understanding and involvement in stewardship of our national forests. In 2012, Urban Connections collaborated with Eastern Region forests/prairie, the Northern Research Station, and Northeastern Area State & Private Forestry, and over 120 partners to directly reach 124,012 urban residents. Messages shared include natural resource management, outdoor recreation opportunities, and the value of public lands and stewardship. The vision of Urban Connections is to nurture existing partnerships, such as Greenfield Village in Detroit, Urban Treehouse Program in Milwaukee, and Center for Youth and Families in Boston, and pursue new ones. 2012 saw the initiation of many new partnerships and amazing projects.

We thank you for your involvement and support, and I look forward to an incredible 2013!

—Acting Regional Forester
Mary Beth Borst

Urban Connections saw great successes connecting citizens to the land in Fiscal Year (FY) 2012. We are proud to share them with you! Items featured in this report reflect a shared vision among the Forest Service's many programs, partners, volunteers, and community members. Thanks to excellent collaboration—from planning to sharing information—we celebrate our best year to date in terms of building connections between rural and urban communities in Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Minneapolis.



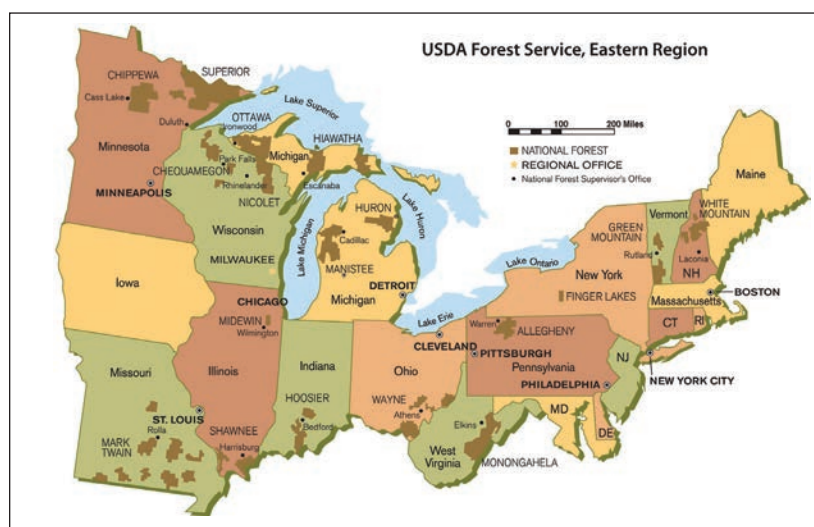
Vision and Mission of Urban Connections includes the following elements

The **vision** of Urban Connections is to grow and foster long-term relationships with urban environments resulting in increased stewardship of natural resources, from backyards to America's forests and become an agency representative of the public we serve.

The **mission** of Urban Connections is to engage urban communities to help *Sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of current and future generations.*

Program Highlights include:

- **Awarded:**
 - **National More Kids in the Woods Grant** with Detroit, Michigan communities
 - **National Children's Forest Grant** with Milwaukee, Wisconsin communities
 - **National Smokey Bear Award** with Betty Brinn Children's Museum of Milwaukee, Wisconsin
 - **Michigan Alliance for Outdoor and Environmental Education Appreciation Award**
- **28 Partnership agreements** in communities throughout the East
- **Shared investment in communities** to achieve natural resource goals — \$2,457,025
- **499,359 people reached** through substantial efforts of Forest Service and partner organizations
- **Distributed materials** about Forest Service programs to 66,617 people
- **Increased Twitter followers** with an average monthly Twitter exposure of 50,000 impressions.
- **25 student interns hired** through Forest Service programs to gain natural resource career skills



BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Highlights of a successful FY 2012 include:

- **Boston Youth Experience First-hand the Importance of Watersheds and Forest Management.** Eight apprentices, with Boston's Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy Green & Grow program, traveled to the White Mountain National Forest and Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest for a multi-day trip and interactions with Forest Service professionals. In addition to gaining natural resource information, they learned about the diversity of careers available with the Forest Service.
- **Through Movement and Dance, Boston Elementary Students Create a Strong Connection to their Natural Environment.** Sixty-five Boston youths (3rd and 5th graders) of Samuel Mason and Oliver Holmes Elementary Schools participated in this unique environmental learning program called Moving Field Guides. Leading the session was a representative of Forest Service's Northern Research Station and three dancers from Dance Exchange in Maryland.
- **Attendees to the "Explore Space with Smokey Bear" Event Learn about the Forest Service's Connection to NASA.** Commemorating Smokey Bear's visit to the international space station, this multi-sponsored event introduced over 200 participants to ways NASA and the Forest Service work together to conserve trees, water, and natural resources. On hand at the event was NASA astronaut Mike Foreman.
- **Urban Connections Participates in Boston's Outdoor Nation Summit.** Over 140 young adults (ages 16-28) converged on the University of Massachusetts – Boston to participate in an Outdoor Nation Summit. Attendees were challenged to develop and implement programs addressing barriers to enjoyment of the great outdoors. Through an environmental career panel discussion, attendees learned about Forest Service job opportunities.
- **Boston Youth, Including Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts, Plant Trees and Learn how to be Environmental Stewards.** Participation of 1,060 youth (ages 6-12) in three different environmental science learning workshops occurred through the Kids4Trees program. This effort is coordinated between the Forest Service and a number of local partners.

Boston Coordinator
Jessie L. Scott III
251 Causeway Street, Mailroom, Suite 900
Boston, Massachusetts 02114
617.626.4979
jlscott@fs.fed.us



Scouts celebrate Smokey's historic visit to the International Space Station with NASA's goodwill ambassador Astro, during the Explore Space with Smokey Bear event



Madison Elementary students participating in the Moving Field Guides program



Boston Urban Connections Coordinator Jessie Scott (center) co-staffs an informational table with a representative from the White Mountain National Forest at a career fair

"America needs to see the value of connecting urban and ethnically diverse youth and families to the woods. The potential exists to produce environmentally sophisticated advocates from these communities who will take up the charge to care for the earth and continue the work of Urban Connections."

— Dr. Jacqueline A. Maloney, Executive Director, Seeds of Hope Stewardship for Sustainability

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Highlights of a successful FY 2012 include:

- **Chicago-area Families Enjoy Recreational Opportunities in the Great Outdoors & Gain Wildfire Prevention Tips!** Hundreds of youth and adults participated in Kid's Fest held at Wampum Lake in Cook County, Illinois. Hosted by Fishin' Buddies, the event featured clinics and small group activities, including camping, boating, rock climbing, canoeing, and fishing. Smokey Bear was on hand to share wildfire prevention messages, while Forest Service representatives shared information about the nearby Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.
- **Visitors to Chicago's Shedd Aquarium Receive Education about Aquatic Invasive Species and Importance of the Health of the Great Lakes Ecosystem.** Thanks to a successful partnership with Shedd, Forest Service messages are being shared with a diverse audience of 2.2 million visitors per year. In addition to learning more about the Forest Service's involvement with aquatic invasive species, they are also introduced to opportunities at the nearby Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie.
- **Participants at the 2nd Annual URBAANE Conference Gain Valuable Exposure to Natural Resource Careers and the Environment.** Thanks to a successful partnership with Fuller Park Community Development Corporation, the Forest Service participated in the Urban Resolutions for Bridging African Americans to Natural Environments (URBAANE) conference at Chicago State University. Three hundred twenty eight people were on hand to absorb Forest Service messages and the importance of disaster preparedness.
- **Chicago Youth Gain Insights on Ecology and History of Local Waterways through a Fun and Educational Canoe Trip!** Approximately 50 "youth from underserved communities" participated in a high quality educational outdoor experience, which included paddling the Skokie Lagoons through The Wilderness Inquiry. Connecting waterways to land and resource management, these students swapped the "sea" for "land" as they joined Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie staff to remove Buckthorn, an invasive species. The Wilderness Inquiry recently signed a National Memorandum of Understanding with the Forest Service.



Attendees at Chicago's URBAANE conference including Eden Place's Michael Howard (front left)



Forest Service presence at Fishin' Buddies event!



Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie employee staffs a booth at Kid's Fest

Daryl Pridgen
Urban Connections Program Manager
626 E. Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202
414.297.3590
dpridgen@fs.fed.us

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Highlights of a successful FY 2012 include:

- **Detroit Youth will “Get Outdoors” Through Exploration of River Rouge Park!** A More Kids in the Woods grant was awarded to the Our LAND program sponsored by the Hiawatha and Huron – Manistee National Forests and The Greening of Detroit. The Our LAND project allows 250 students (4th and 5th grades) from Detroit to explore ecosystems in the nearby River Rouge Park, increasing their awareness of local resources and providing opportunities for healthy, active exploration. This grant aligns with President Obama’s America’s Great Outdoors and First Lady Michelle Obama’s Let’s Move! Initiatives.
- **Wayne County Implements Conservation Stewards Program.** In partnership with the city of Detroit, Michigan State University Extension, Forest Service, and others, this program taught participants about local natural resources, on-going protection efforts, and management of the national forests. In addition, this group committed to providing 250 hours of stewardship service in Detroit.
- **Increasing Nature Curriculum in Detroit Public Schools.** Twenty Detroit public school teachers participated in the Develop Forest Stewards Program, resulting in an increase of nature-based curriculum in the classrooms of 1,500 students. This partnership effort between the Forest Service, Belle Isle Nature Zoo, and the Building Community Capacity to Manage Private/Public Forests, received a Michigan Alliance for Outdoor & Environmental Education Appreciation Award.
- **Dearborn’s The Henry Ford Helps Share Forest Service Messages with Two Million Annual Visitors.** Along with the history of Henry Ford & the automobile, visitors to The Henry Ford’s Greenfield Village receive a unique glimpse of the Forest Service’s past, present, and future. Thanks to a successful 10-year partnership with The Henry Ford, the Forest Service is able to share important messages through Forest Ranger presentations and Penny Pines seedling distribution.
- **Detroit Public gets Unique Insight into History of the Modern Environmental Movement through Green Fire Film.** Urban Connections partnered with Wayne State University and the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge to host showings of Emmy Award winning Green Fire: Aldo Leopold & a Land Ethic for Our Time. The over 300 attendees also gained information about the 100 year anniversary of the Weeks Act. Group discussions followed the film for the audience of alumni, community, current graduate students, current undergraduate students, faculty, parents, prospective students, and Forest Service staff.

Detroit Coordinator
Lisa Perez
1400 Oakman
Detroit, Michigan 48238
313.494.4735
lperez@fs.fed.us



Students from Detroit’s Ecotek at the 2012 USB Biobased Stakeholders workshop in Dearborn, Michigan



Youth helps make bat box with materials donated from General Motors, which were placed at locations throughout the Eastern Region



Historic Forest Service Ranger is on hand in The Henry Ford’s Greenfield Village to talk to guests about the history of the Forest Service

“The Monarch Conference was absolutely awesome!! It was one of the best conferences I have ever attended. I plan to use what I have learned from the Monarch Institute along with the Forest Unit this school year. My students will definitely be having class outside. I am very excited about being able to enhance our butterfly garden at Clippert from the grant opportunity attached with participation in the institute.”

— Tracy Ortiz, Teacher, Clippert Academy, Detroit Public Schools



A Milwaukee public bus gets the word out about the Smokey & Woodsy exhibit at the Betty Brinn Children's Museum



Milwaukee urban youth work with the conservation education interns to learn firsthand about land management through an exercise called "If You Owned an Acre"

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

Highlights of a successful FY 2012 include:

- **Exploring Nature through Urban and Rural Camping Experiences.** Thirty youth (ages 8-12) from several Milwaukee schools participated in the Milwaukee Urban Overnight Program, sponsored by Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful and the Forest Service. After camping overnight in a local park, the group travelled to the Trees for Tomorrow Natural Resources Specialty School near the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in Eagle River, Wisconsin. They sang around the campfire, hiked, and learned valuable survival skills throughout their multi-day trip.
- **Creating a Children's Forest in the City.** The Urban Ecology Center of Milwaukee was the recipient of 2012 Forest Service Children's forest funding for its "Children's Forest in the City" proposal. The Children's Forest will be just one element of the new Milwaukee Rotary Centennial Arboretum being developed along the Milwaukee River. The 40-acre space includes a two-mile trail loop with wheelchair access, children's kiosks, nature play areas, and sensory gardens that will give young people a rare opportunity to connect with nature in an urban setting. More than 100,000 people live within a two-mile radius of the planned arboretum. The site is one of twenty-one nationally recognized Children's Forests in the country, whose mission is to get young people to take a leadership role in forest management by giving them a voice in caring for the land.
- **The Milwaukee Urban Tree House Provides Unique Opportunity for Urban Residents to Connect to Nature.** Over 700 people gained firsthand knowledge of stewardship of natural resources through Milwaukee's Urban Tree House program. Thanks to successful partnerships among the Forest Service, Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful, Neighborhood House of Milwaukee, Friends of Lynden Hill, and Bureau of Land Management, environmental stewardship in the city continues to grow.
- **1300 Milwaukee Youth (ages 5-16) Learn Valuable Natural Resource Information.** Throughout the summer, four Forest Service conservation education interns conducted programs at 12 partner sites throughout the city.
- **Milwaukee Public Television Shares Forest Service Job Opportunities** through its Black Nouveau television program. Originally aired April 4, 2012, production #2018 featured an interview with two employees sharing information on Forest Service employment and scholarship opportunities. This educational programming reached a potential 2.1 million viewers in southeastern Wisconsin and northern Illinois.

Milwaukee Coordinator
Jean Claassen
626 E. Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202
414.297.1394
jclaassen@fs.fed.us

"Partnering with the US Forest Service Urban Connections Program and collaborating with their various partners has created a tremendous learning and discovering opportunity for the children in the greater Milwaukee community. We have introduced several programs that have motivated children to engage, explore and get excited about the forest."

— Joe Wilson, Director, Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful and Greening Milwaukee

MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

Highlights of a successful FY 2012 include:

- **Program Helps City Residents Build Outdoor and Leadership Skills While Completing Projects that Benefit the Environment.** Members of the Latino-Aztec non-profit Ce Tempoxcalli participated in a unique program called Step Up North. The program involved a partnership between Ce Tempoxcalli, Superior National Forest, and the Laurentian Environmental Center, a public educational facility in the Forest. The 100 participants performed activities based in their community followed by trips to the Superior National Forest and Laurentian Environmental Center to learn wilderness camping skills and how forests function, as well as complete service projects.
- **Forest Service Hosts a Hmong Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) Crew in Partnership with the National Park Service.** As part of the Coldwater spring restoration effort, led by the National Park Service, four Hmong youth collected 15 gallons of acorns, removed invasive buckthorn from 1 1/3 acres, and assisted 105 volunteers on the project site. This is part of the newest section of the Mississippi River and Recreation Area. Through this experience, the YCC crew gained first-hand experience about natural resource career opportunities.
- **High School Students Gain Valuable Insights on Effect of Invasive Species on Rural and Urban Forests.** Students from Denfeld High School in Duluth, Roosevelt and Patrick Henry High Schools in Minneapolis, learned first-hand from Forest Service scientists about invasive species (such as Emerald Ash Borer-EAB), their effects, eradication efforts, and roadblocks, such as the EAB's fascinating tolerance to Minnesota's winter temperatures. This was part of an environmental science immersion program sponsored by Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center.
- **Minneapolis Residents "Get Outdoors" & Enjoy a Variety of Recreational Activities at Powderhorn Park.** Approximately 1,000 urban families participated in this National Get Outdoors (GO) Day event featuring camping, biking, canoeing, paddle boarding, fishing, climbing, and archery. They also received campfire safety tips from Smokey Bear himself and learned about recreational opportunities on the nearby Chippewa and Superior National Forests. GO Day supports the First Lady's "Let's Move" Campaign.
- **Minneapolis Students Learn about Natural Resource Career Opportunities.** The Youth Outdoor Careers Advisory Council consists of Minneapolis public schools staff who partnered with non-profit and various agencies to provide internships and career information. In 2012, 38 youth were hired for summer job or internship positions with varied partners including the Forest Service.

Minneapolis/St. Paul Coordinator
Teri Heyer
1992 Folwell Avenue, 3rd floor
St. Paul, Minnesota 55108
651.649.5239
theyer@fs.fed.us



Youth conservation corps at the original spring house at Coldwater Spring unit of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area



Chippewa National Forest employee Michele Heiker joins participants at REI's winter fest at Fort Snelling State Park



Kris Reichenbach, public affairs officer with the Superior National Forest, shares with Ce Tempoxcalli youth how a forest comes back after a prescribed burn
(photo by Jerry Lopez)

"... What we have accomplished is a meaningful relationship that resulted in 100 people getting exposed to the wilderness with most of them loving every bit of it. The power of our camps goes beyond the classroom teachings and enters into the hearts and minds of those who participated. I would like to see us continue without any grant proposal being tied to our maintaining this relationship. It is about us as people who come together through shared values and experiences for the purpose of serving others."

— Jerry Lopez-CeTempoxcalli

EASTERN REGION FORESTS WELCOME YOU

WELCOME TO THE
Forest Service



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

"Thanks for all of your great work and for making our partnership strong!"

— John Nielson, *The Henry Ford*

Urban Connections
Program Manager
Daryl Pridgen
626 E. Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202
414.297.3590
dpridgen@fs.fed.us

Photo: Children participating in the Junior Snow Ranger program held at Belle Isle Nature Zoo, Detroit, Michigan

Urban Connections is fortunate to have excellent relationships at all levels. We appreciate the commitment of our friends, volunteers, and partners. We continuously strive to identify needs and work to provide quality outreach and involvement. You make the difference, helping us accomplish these goals. In summary, thank you!

We acknowledge the even greater need to connect with the public on important environmental issues being addressed and supported by the Forest Service, for present and future generations. We look forward to continued collaboration to share these important messages.

o o o o

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED



UC webpage: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/urban-connections>

UC Twitter: http://www.twitter.com/UC_USFS

FS Volunteer Opportunities:

www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r9/workingtogether/?cid=stelprdb5213867

FS Partnership Opportunities:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/aboutus/partnership/index.shtml>

The Forests in the Eastern Region Welcome You! Plan a visit today:

Allegheny (Pennsylvania): <http://fs.usda.gov/allegheny>

Chequamegon-Nicolet (Wisconsin): <http://fs.usda.gov/cnnf>

Chippewa (Minnesota): <http://fs.usda.gov/chippewa>

Green Mountain & Finger Lakes (VT/NY): <http://fs.usda.gov/gmfl>

Hiawatha (Upper Michigan): <http://fs.usda.gov/hiawatha>

Hoosier (Indiana): <http://fs.usda.gov/hoosier>

Huron-Manistee (Michigan): <http://fs.usda.gov/hmnf>

Midewin NTP (Illinois): <http://fs.usda.gov/midewin>

Monongahela (West Virginia): <http://fs.usda.gov/mnfw>

Ottawa (Upper Michigan): <http://fs.usda.gov/ottawa>

Shawnee (Illinois): <http://fs.usda.gov/shawnee>

Superior (Minnesota): <http://fs.usda.gov/superior>

Wayne (Ohio): <http://fs.usda.gov/wayne>

White Mountain (New Hampshire): www.fs.usda.gov/whitemountain

